

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed September 7, 2006 has been carefully considered. Within the Office Action Claims 1-22 have been rejected. The Applicants have amended Claims 1, 2, and 5-7 and have cancelled Claims 11-22. The Applicants reserve the right to further pursue the cancelled claims in a continuation and/or divisional application as well as for appeal purposes. In addition, the Applicants have added new Claims 23-34. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested. A three month extension fee is enclosed.

Abstract

The Abstract has been changed as shown in the Amendments section.

Rejection under U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-8, 11-16 and 18-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,897,331 to Sopori (hereinafter "Sopori"). The Applicants respectfully traverse.

According to the M.P.E.P., a claim is anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a), (b) and (e) only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.

Sopori describes a solar cell which has a stack having a glass substrate 3, a rear face electrode 2 and a p/n junction which is made in a semiconductor substrate 1. The electrode 2 is used for draining the current which is generated at the p/n junction (Sopori, Column 10, Line 33). Thus, the electrode 2 cannot be compared with the carrier recombination zone claimed in Claim 1, because the electrode 2 of Sopori does not provide resistive electrical contact between the

electrically conductive material and the first thin layer of the semiconductor material. In addition, the substrate 3 in Sopori is made of an insulating material, such as glass or a polymer and thus is not a substrate of electrically conductive material as recited in Claim 1. For at least these reasons, Sopori does not teach each and every element/limitation recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, Claim 1 is distinguishable from Sopori and is in a condition for allowance.

Concerning the process of forming the device in Sopori, Sopori describes that the metal layer 2 is merely deposited onto substrate 3, and that the semiconductor material 1 is deposited onto the metal layer 2 (Sopori, Column 10, Lines 32-40). In contrast, Claims 23 and 29 recite, among other things, thinning the semiconductor substrate to form a thinned semiconductor substrate and performing electrically conductive bonding of the thinned semiconductor substrate with an electrically conductive substrate. Thus, Sopori does not disclose or suggest each and every element/limitation recited in Claims 23 and 29 of the present application. Accordingly, Claims 23 and 29 are distinguishable over Sopori and are thus in a condition for allowance.

Claims 2-8 have also been rejected in light of Sopori. However, Claims 2-8 are dependent on Independent Claim 1. As stated above, Claim 1 is allowable over Sopori. Accordingly, Claims 2-8 are allowable for being dependent on an allowable base claim. In addition, new Claims 23-28 are dependent on Independent Claim 22; and new Claims 30-34 are dependent on Independent Claim 29. As stated above, Claims 22 and 29 are allowable over Sopori. Accordingly, Claims 23-28 and 30-34 are allowable for being dependent on an allowable base claims.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 9-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Sopori in view of Ishikawa. The rejection is respectfully traversed. However, Claims 9 and 10 are

dependent on Claim 1 and are thus in a condition for allowance for being dependent on an allowable base claim.

New Claims

The Applicants have added new Claims 23-34 to the present application. The Applicants believe that New claims 23-34 are fully supported by the specification and no new matter has been added. Allowance of new Claims 23-34 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

It is believed that this reply places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance. Early favorable consideration of this reply is earnestly solicited.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. Please charge any additional required fee or credit any overpayment not otherwise paid or credited to our deposit account No. 50-1698.

Respectfully submitted,

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